

# Record

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THE BAPTIST

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

## Camps preparing for summer season

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

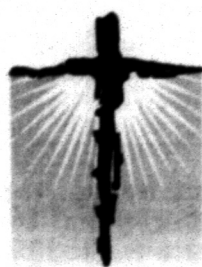
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MISSISSIPPI  
BAPTISTS

Workers at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton and Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko are putting the finishing touches on new facilities in the few days left before summer campers flood the two Mississippi Baptist campgrounds.

Garaywa Camp and Conference Center, the Mississippi Baptist Girls in Action (GA) campground operated by the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, will open a greatly expanded dining hall and inaugurate new handicap-accessible facilities.

The dining hall will be 3,200 feet larger when campers arrive this summer, according to camp manager Roddy Reed. With the complete renovation of the kitchen two years ago to meet increasing demand, Reed said campers should notice a better dining experience this summer.

"The serving line and fountain drinks island have been relocated to help the flow of diners at meal time" he said. "The building expansion also includes two separate, private dining rooms in addition to the larger dining area, and all the ceiling tiles have been replaced."

Reed also pointed to the installation of a state of the art fire suppression system throughout the dining hall building. "There are sprinklers everywhere in the building, including the attic, outside porches, and even the bathrooms."

Reed said the fire suppression system is so innovative that the City of Clinton Fire Department sent its firefighters to Garaywa to study it once installation was completed. A number of fire



**NEW FLOOR FINISH** — Morgan Brashier (right) of Brandon applies stain to the new concrete floor of the expanded dining hall at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton, as camp manager Roddy Reed (left) and food service coordinator Greg Hicks look on. The dining hall expansion totals 3,200 additional square feet and includes a state of the art automatic fire suppression system for the entire building. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

hydrants have also been installed around the property since last year to meet code and enhance fire safety even more, he added.

"We already have 1,571 campers registered for this summer. We take their safety very seriously," Reed said.

Handicap-accessible rails have been added to walkways around the dining hall, and concrete walkways to the Activities Building next to the dining hall have been upgraded to take out a great deal of the steepness that made it difficult for handicapped people to get to the Activities Building.

"Our goal always was to have everything done and ready for the campers on their first day here this summer," Reed said, "and it looks like we're going to meet that goal."

Central Hills Retreat, the Mississippi Baptist Royal Ambassadors (RA) campground operated by the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will also open a number of new facilities by the time campers arrive for the summer.

Camp manager Jim Ray said a new snack bar/infirmar building is in the final stages of completion on the spot formerly occupied by the old, smaller snack bar. The front portion of the building features six snack windows and more storage space, while the remainder of the building will house an infir-

mary that includes an examination room, boys and girls bathrooms, separate sick bays for boys and girls, and nurse's quarters.

"That's going to be a tremendous improvement over what we've had in the past, and it was built by volunteer labor," Ray said. "I appreciate all the volunteers who made this building possible for the campers this year."

The miniature golf course that opened last year has been improved, Ray said, with the addition of contour landscaping and decking that extends all the way to the clubhouse.

"That was done by volunteers, too. They even oriented some of the lumber to make crosses in the decks, which are very impressive to everyone who sees it," Ray said. "I appreciate those volunteers as well."

The horse barn was been remodeled and upgraded by volunteers for the 19 horses now on site, and ground is being cleared for an expansion of the dining hall that will include two large banquet rooms and more space in the main hall for campers to spread out while enjoying camp cuisine.

Ray said the new dining hall, which will feature camper-friendly wash stations outside, should be ready for the 2009 summer camping season.

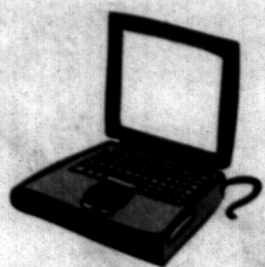
Like Garaywa, the Central Hills summer sessions are nearly booked, Ray said. "Central Hills is an exciting place. I really believe this summer will be the best yet."

For more information on Mississippi Baptists' campgrounds and the summer programs offered there, visit [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org).

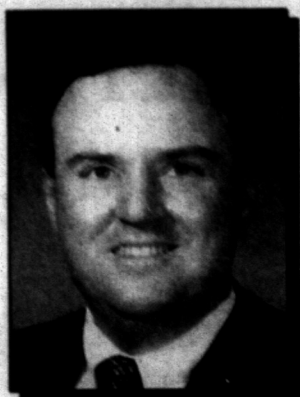


**PLAYING THE COURSE** — Steven "Buster" Lacey (left) of Vaiden and J.T. Henderson of Cleveland check out the miniature golf course at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko. The miniature golf course, which opened during the 2007 summer camping season, has been completed with contoured landscaping and clubhouse walkways. Central Hills Retreat will also be opening a new, expansive snack bar building that includes upgraded infirmar facilities. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)





## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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# No room on the memorials

The recent article by Associated Press in a local newspaper provided yet another stark reminder of life today, just in time for Memorial Day 2008 (excerpted):

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — When the Army's famed 82nd Airborne Division dedicated its own memorial to paratroopers killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, three sides of the wide granite column were blank. Three years later, there is no more room.

The 82nd isn't the only division squeezed for memorial space. A memorial at Fort Hood in Texas honoring fallen soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division... will soon be out of room.

Consummate sadness is the only way to describe such a state of affairs. Mankind has so soiled God's exquisite creation that there is not enough room on the manifold memorials to list all the war dead, and so it has been for a long time. Surely, God grieves. Surely, He never meant for His beautiful granite to be used for such purposes.

Warriors through the millennia have always felt the idealist's call to defend the precepts most important to them, whether those be country, family, or any number of other reasons to go to war — and the vast majority of that call has fallen on young people.

It's not unusual to watch a documentary about one of the great Pacific Ocean naval battles of World War II, and discover that



many of the sailors killed were only 19 or 20 years old. Some statistical sources peg the average age of a U.S. soldier landing on the Normandy beaches on D-Day as 23. Today, Iraq and Afghanistan warriors average 22 years of age.

What was I doing when I was 19? What was I thinking about when I was 22? Where was I at age 23? Whatever I was thinking or doing, or wherever I was at those ages, I was not putting my life on the line for my country. I was not fighting for our liberty or freeing an oppressed people from tyranny. I was not a warrior.

Before I was born, many others fought in my defense. Many others died for me, before I was ever conceived. Many others suffered physically and mentally for the rest of their lives, so I wouldn't have to do so. Their scars are with them even today.

A fellow church member shares a plaintive prayer request — since returning from a tour of duty in Iraq, his son cannot sleep at night. Another father shares that his Iraq veteran son can't tolerate loud noises. A mother describes her child's despondency and sense of failure at having been evacuated with a gunshot wound and discovering later that all his buddies had been wiped out in the fire-fight after he left.

These warriors have paid a high price for me, and for you. Many others have paid that high price, and yet many others have paid the ultimate price. None of it was easy for them, and what they have done for us should never be taken for granted.

On Memorial Day 2008, let us pause to remember the sacrifices made on our behalf, and the sacrifices that are still being made today on our behalf. Unfortunately, the future seems to hold more of the same.

The Associated Press article closes with the observation that a larger granite wall has been installed at the 82nd Airborne memorial, for the names yet to be inscribed.

"We can put on as many as we need to now," said retired command Sgt. Maj. Roger Vickers, who served for 14 years in the 82nd. "The hope is we don't ever have to put another name on it at all."

However unlikely that may be, it should be the hope we all hold in the deepest recesses of our hearts. Until that day comes, thank a veteran like you really mean it.

## GUEST OPINION:

### Getting back to soul winning

By Ray Downey, member  
Oakdale Church, Brandon

I was surprised and disappointed to read in a recent article in The Baptist Record of the sharp decline in the number of baptisms in Southern Baptist churches during the past few years.

I was baptized as a new believer into Central Baptist Church in Mobile, Al., on October 26, 1947, so I have had over sixty years to observe how the emphasis has changed in our Southern Baptist churches. What are we doing wrong or what are we not doing right?

First, many pastors are not personal soul-winners, nor do they train their church members to lead people to faith in Christ. Outreach evangelism has become a relic of the past. I believe that in every church there are those who would like to become soul-winners, but they are not getting the kind of encouragement and training to fulfill the Great Commission.

At my church our pastor teaches a course in soul-winning each spring and fall. Whether the group of new learners is large or small, people come to faith in Christ when we go out into the community to speak God's words of salvation. The Gospel is still "the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes," and believers should prove it by witnessing to the lost regularly.

A few weeks ago I was privileged to lead a teenaged girl to faith in Christ as part of our weekly outreach visitation. My

pastor taught me how to witness effectively, and he leads by example. Every Monday night our pastor oversees outreach visitation and often leads people to faith in Christ.

Many of our members lead people to faith in Christ regularly because our pastor led us to expect people to be saved and to share the Gospel with them.

Second, too many pastors are preaching a watered-down message which seldom contains a fervent rendering of the plan of salvation. Unbelievers present in many church services every Sunday are NOT hearing the plan of salvation. They are NOT hearing sermons that make it clear that there is a place of eternal torment as well as a place of eternal joy.

"Feel-good" sermons don't help people escape that place called hell. As a matter of fact, hell is a word seldom found in modern-day preaching. Jesus didn't hesitate to warn His listeners about hell.

Neither should any pastor today. In eternity no one will complain about having been offended by a message on hell that led to their salvation, but many will be offended that they did not hear.

My pastor includes the plan of salvation and a salvation prayer at the end of almost every sermon that he preaches, and I never get tired of hearing it. Time after time, unbelievers walked the aisle and said to him, "When you prayed that prayer, I prayed it too, with all my heart." Moreover, because our church members have heard it so many times, we are constantly being equipped to share it with unbelievers.

Third, pastors are not scheduling evangelistic revivals like those of the past. My mother was saved in a revival meeting in the 1930s. Evangelist Hyman Appleman was preaching. She later led me to faith in Christ using one verse of Scripture that she had heard and learned during the revival: John 3:16.

Today many spirit-filled, full-time, vocational evangelists' gifts are wasted because we have become too "sophisticated" or too "progressive" to believe God can still work in the same way that He has in the past. Lost people are still being saved in revivals, except in churches that no longer hold them.

Every week in our state many people are saved in revival services. The truth may be that we have become too lazy to do the work necessary to reach the lost. If it's not broken, why fix it? Revivals have resulted in hundreds of thousands saved. Let's revive revivals and see once again what God can do.

If we are to reverse the trend of declining baptisms in our Southern Baptist churches, it will be because we make our primary purpose and goal the same that Jesus emphasized when He said, "I have come to seek and to save that which was lost." This must begin with our pastors.

Having re-read what I have just written, I am sure that this Southern Baptist deacon offended many pastors. If that is the case, I would remind you pastors of the old saying, "If the shoe fits, wear it," or better yet — Pastor, put on some new shoes and try to wear them out as you walk the path of a new evangelistic effort in your ministry.

Look behind you, and I believe you'll find many of your congregation following you.



# Pastor gives up pulpit for stint as chaplain

PENSACOLA, Fla. (BP) — It's been nearly 24 years since Ed Erwin observed Memorial Day in a military role, so it holds special significance this year for the longtime Southern Baptist pastor. At age 48, Erwin joined the Navy as a chaplain on January 7.

The son of a retired Army officer, Erwin enlisted at an age when many fellow Baby Boomers are pondering future pension benefits or Social Security's future.

"I know as a chaplain I'll be involved in a number of services," Erwin said of Memorial Day's commemoration of men and women who died in military service. "I've done that before as a pastor in Shelbyville (Ky.)," said Erwin, who was pastor of First Church there for 12-plus years.

Memorial Day began in 1866 to honor veterans of the Civil War, but after World War I it was expanded to include those who died in any war.

"There are a number of veterans who inspire me," Erwin said. One is still living — his father, retired Lt. Col. Hamilton Erwin.

A conversation the two had in the fall of 2006 stirred the son to think about rejoining the Air Force. Ed Erwin had served with the reserves during the summers of 1983-84 while in seminary. When his father, a Vietnam veteran, commented that the Army was taking people back with prior experience, Ed began to ask whether the Air Force would do the same.

"After he mentioned this is when I started getting excited," said Erwin, a veteran of 22 years in the pulpit and a graduate of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. "Through Dad talking to me, I felt God had spoken to me about the military."

However, after contacting an Air Force recruiter he quickly was told: "You're too old." A few hours later, a similar response came from an Army representative.

Erwin put the issue on the back burner until he learned in February 2007 that the Navy's only age requirement was to be 21 and there was a possibility they would grant a waiver past normal retirement age of 62.

If the waiver eventually is granted, it would allow him to complete a

20-year career, one of several goals he has set for the next two decades — but before entering the Navy, Erwin had to pass various examinations. That included a physical in which he ran 1.5 miles in just over 10 minutes and did 71 sit-ups and 50 push-ups.

That helped him prepare for basic training and chaplain school, where in the brisk Northeastern winter he ran seven miles at a clip three times a week. His routine included regular weightlifting sessions and a weekly one-mile swim.

Why submit to such rigors at his age? Because his nation is at war and needs chaplains, Erwin said. "It's challenging, the separation from family, physical endurance, the stress. I have a great respect for my fellow chaplains; I'm proud to be associated with them."

"You make many sacrifices. There's nothing they could pay you to make up for these sacrifices. You have to be called."



Rhonda and Ed Erwin

Most people don't have any clue what's involved."

Erwin knows he could serve in the war-torn Middle East, even though that may not occur until 2011. Currently stationed at a base in Florida's Panhandle, he acknowledges that everyone who signed up recently faces certain duty overseas.

Still, he doesn't regret his new career. "The chaplains are the cream of the crop," Erwin said. "They're the best kind of ministers. They're physically fit, emotional strong, and intellectual. They're highly intelligent."

Bolstering Erwin's decision to head for the military in middle age is his wife Rhonda. The daughter of former missionaries, her father also had served in the Air Force, including a tour in Vietnam during the war in Southeast Asia. When her husband shared his thoughts about enlisting, she replied, "That's awesome. Go for it."

Although that meant spending nearly three months apart during training, Rhonda stands by her decision to swap the role of pastor's wife for chaplain's spouse. "My philosophy has always been to be ministry partners together," said Rhonda, who taught Sunday School and helped lead Vacation Bible School in Shelbyville.

"I'm still going to be doing the exact same thing, of being extremely supportive, not just to him but also in ministry with him. I will be ministering myself to different families and trying as best I can to help wives and counsel them," Rhonda said.

She said she is especially proud of her husband following in the same line as her family, noting that both sides came to America

in the early 1600s and that many served in some military capacity through the years.

When her husband lends his voice to Memorial Day observances, Rhonda Erwin also will reflect on those who went before her — and call her father to thank him for his service to the nation.

"Ed's father did three tours in Vietnam before he got his shoulder blown off. I'm so honored and I want them to know how grateful I am for their sacrifice."

"Anybody in the military — that's all they do is sacrifice. It's not a job to get ahead [or] make a boatload of money. All it is sacrifice for others and for your country," Rhonda said.

Of course, with his wife handling the primary child-rearing duties for two youngsters, Erwin returns the favor when he talks about those who deserve the most credit.

Spouses of soldiers and sailors make a greater sacrifice because they have to take care of financial and other family matters, including acting as a single parent when their loved one deploys, Erwin said.

"The Navy spouses are the true heroes," he said. "They should get the glory for all they do. They're the ones who make it possible for us to do what we do."

## A chaplain's duty

DOVER, Del. (BP) — Ready to collect the remains of her husband from Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, a woman looks closely at Chaplain Klavens Noel and says the first thing that comes to mind. "Chaplain, there are no words. No words to say in these circumstances," Noel recalls her telling him. When family members of those killed in war show up at Dover's gates, Noel tries to convey the same message he lives 24 hours a day with nearly 100 personnel at the mortuary building where the war dead are brought to be identified, prepared, cosmetized, dressed for burial, and delivered to their final resting places. Noel, a major in the Air Force Reserves, announced on Memorial Day weekend last year that he was stepping down as pastor of the Haitian ministry at First Church of Central Florida in Orlando to serve at Dover. He has been endorsed as a Southern Baptist chaplain by the North American Mission Board. Clayton Cloer, pastor of First Church of Central Florida, said the church gave Noel a standing ovation when he announced his decision to serve those who care for the fallen at Dover. "[Chaplain] Noel is there with all of the opening of the [body] bags. It's unbelievable emotionally what they have to do. It's an incredible, high honor," Cloer pointed out. "Death causes us to think about the immediacy of life, how short life is and what we can do in this life that will make a difference," Noel said.

## Looking back

10 years ago

Church membership in the Southern Baptist Convention reached 15,891,514 in 1997, according to annual statistics reported by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

20 years ago

The Southern Baptist Convention is "in a crisis of spirit," says Charles Fuller, chairman of the FBC Peace Committee, in a statement on the state of the SBC issued in advance of the annual meeting scheduled for June 14-16 in San Antonio.

30 years ago

For the third year in a row, Mississippi provides a vice-president for the Southern Baptist Convention. Chester Quarrels is chosen as first vice-president.

MISSISSIPPI  
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND  
FRONT PAGE

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## Bibliocipher

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CAB UGVE DNABP WL WE,  
WC, UGQY PQ HQ HMCC-  
QEQQ CAB PAMB CVMNEL,  
PQ LGVNN EVZQ WE RVE-  
QYENP? HME WC, UGQY PQ  
OA UQNN, VYO LMCCQB  
CAB WE, PQ EVZQ WE  
RVEWQYENP, EGWL WL  
VXXQREVHNQ UWEG DAQ.  
CWBLE RREQB EUA:  
EUQYEP

Clue: R = P

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans Eleven Thirty-three.





#### YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

*"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)*

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## Clarification

The Editor's Notebook commentary in the May 15 issue failed to state the political party affiliation of former New York Governor Eliot Spitzer. Spitzer is a Democrat.

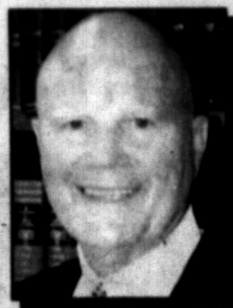
## SELLING OUT SHORT

I am not a big yard sale person. I know folks who can hardly sleep on Friday night because they are so excited about getting up at the crack of dawn and getting out there on the road to see what wonderful things somebody has put out in their yard to sell for almost nothing. The few times I have been to yard sales I usually end up buying something that won't work and that I can buy brand new for almost the same price. Still for some people, it is an exciting subculture in our land. Many times, they can live in the joy and euphoria of one exciting find and purchase they made on a Saturday.

Recently a part of my family decided to have a Saturday morning garage sale and so they got out all of their need-to-get-rid-of stuff to get it ready for people to come and make an offer on Saturday morning. Everything went well and they made a few dollars from the items that if they did not sell they would either give away or throw away. In the process of marking the prices on the items on the morning of the sale, a number of books were on display. Each one was marked for the sale at 25 cents. One lady who was looking through the books was somewhat puzzled and asked, "I don't think you really want to sell this, do you?" She showed them what they had in the book display marked for 25 cents. What she was holding was a book that came out several years ago when the new state quarters were being minted. As you remember, each state would have its own distinct representation and one of the grandkids had collected all 50 state quarters. There they were in the book neatly displayed and being sold for a quarter. It did not take much of a mathematician to figure out and any bargain hunter could quickly calculate that this was a pretty good deal. Any time you can buy 50 quarters for one quarter you are ahead of the game. On the other side of the equation, obviously they had not intended to sell such a valuable thing for so little. They were selling out short!

From time to time, you will read in the news some incredible find at a flea market or at a garage sale, some painting that is a masterpiece or some historical document that is worth many times over what they paid for it. Maybe it is some valuable timepiece or maybe a book with an inscription and autograph that is priceless. In those cases, the person who is selling the wares ends up selling out short and simply fails to realize what a valuable thing they had in their possession.

While that may happen infrequently, very often I see people who sell themselves out short. I see Christians who do



# Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

not recognize at all the great value that Christ has placed in them. They are believers in whom Christ has come to live and in whom the Lord has placed great gifts that He wants to use to bless others and bring honor to His name. Like the folks selling important things for almost nothing because they do not recognize the wealth and worth, many believers sell themselves short. They never experience what God has in store for them and do not recognize the great value that He places on their lives. Oftentimes they sell themselves short because of one or two traps they fall into that prevents them from seeing how much they are worth to the Lord.

One trap that blinds us is the fact that we cannot see what others may be able to see. Certainly, no one is able to fully comprehend the influence and impact his or her life has on others. Since we may receive little or no feedback, we assume that we are not very significant. The mother who is caught up in the long day-to-day grind of caring for and loving her children may get little or no feedback. She may only receive an argumentative attitude or a sour look for her efforts, which leads her to think that she is worth very little. Nothing could be further from the truth. The pastor who has served a number of years at his church and sought to be faithful in preaching the Word of God and caring for the people may hear an occasional criticism and sel-

dom hear a word of sincere and authentic appreciation, making him question the value of His service to Christ. He is selling himself short.

The layman who has served on committees, worked hard in the ministry, and been faithful for decades may receive no accolades at all. For his efforts, he may only hear someone grumble that they do not agree with something he is trying to do which leads him to think he is not sure that it is worth it. He is mistaken.

We live with people, work with people, worship, and live around people who mean so much to us but we never bother to tell them. While it may be a failure on our part, it may lead them to think that they do not mean much to us. It is an error in our actions and in their thinking.

The other trap in which we get caught is a lack of understanding of how much we are worth and the wealth of treasures that God has placed in us. Paul so beautifully describes as he writes to the church at Corinth, "That God has put great treasures in earthen vessels." He is talking about us. In our talent-obsessed and American Idol-impressed world, we have narrowed giftedness down to a small field and overlooked and undervalued great gifts that God has placed in people.

Hitting a note on perfect pitch is a good thing and certainly enjoyed by many, but possessing the gift of encouragement or expressing the gift of acceptance or sharing with

folks the gift of hope may be of more lasting value in transforming a life. What about the folks who have been entrusted with the great treasure of wisdom? I am not talking about scoring high on an intelligence quiz, but a God-given kind of wisdom that brings heavenly truth to practical living wisdom. Just in conversation, they are able to help someone unravel the calamities of life and find the light and love of God at the end of their dark tunnel.

What about the folks who have been given the gift from God of administration or management? Not the ability just to put together concepts and programs but they are able to bring people along and to become a catalyst that enables others to plug into the Kingdom effort and become invaluable in God's work. It is a wonderful fact that everyone who is reading this who has come to know Jesus as Lord of their lives has been given one or even a multiplicity of gifts. They are not yours simply to be used for self-gratification or to advance to some level or status in the social structure, but to bless others.

It is almost daily that I meet people who have such a narrow and limited view of the enormous treasure that God has put in them. I suppose if they went to a counselor and visited for several sessions they might come to the understanding that they have low self-esteem. That may be — or it may be that they have never discovered and celebrated the great value that God has placed between the cover of the book of their lives. The wonderful thing is that if you discover the treasure that God has put within you it is not a source of pride but of praise. A word of advice and encouragement from me to you today is **do not sell yourself short.**

The author can be contacted at [jfutral@mbcb.org](mailto:jfutral@mbcb.org).

## MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP MINISTRY

It's that time of year.

VISIT

[www.msmbaptistfoundation.org](http://www.msmbaptistfoundation.org)  
TO COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATION

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation's Scholarship Ministry provides needs-based supplemental financial assistance to Mississippi students who are pursuing a degree at a Mississippi Baptist college or a Southern Baptist seminary. For more information about the MBF Scholarship Ministry, please visit our website, [www.msmbaptistfoundation.org](http://www.msmbaptistfoundation.org). Scholarship applications for the 2008-2009 academic year will be available on our website beginning January 1, 2008. Completed applications must be received in the MBF office by April 30.





# CUBAN BAPTISTS WORKING AS BIG CHANGES UNDERWAY

By Tony Martin  
Associate Editor

Most Mississippi Baptists are probably not aware of the opportunities available in the country of Cuba, or of the flourishing of Baptist work in the communist-controlled country less than 90 miles off the Florida coast. With major political changes underway in Cuba, Baptists are well-positioned to respond to the needs of the people.

Victor Gonzalez is a medical doctor in Cuba and president of the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba. "Cuba para Cristo! Cuba for Christ!" he proclaimed during a visit to Mississippi in late April. Gonzalez serves as an oncologist at the university hospital in Havana.

"The Baptist Convention of Western Cuba was organized in 1905," said Gonzalez. "It was born in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention."

Wikipedia, the free on-line encyclopedia, states that the first Cuban Baptists were patriots who were exiled to the United States during the Ten Years' War (1868-1878). Some became Baptists while in the U. S., and later returned to Cuba.

Exile Albert Diaz joined a church in New York City. He returned to Cuba in 1882, and organized an independent congregation at Havana in 1883. In 1885, he was ordained as a Baptist minister and, in 1886, he led his church to become Baptist.

Southern Baptists sent C. R. Daniel to oversee the work in 1901, and he was instrumental in organizing the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba in 1905.

"The Baptist seminary was founded in 1906 in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention, and we had what were considered home missionaries there until Castro took control," said to Perry Robinson of Ellisville, who has been involved in Cuban mission work and is a long-time Mississippi Baptist minister of music.

Robinson, who became involved in Cuban missions in 1994 while serving as a volunteer music missionary in Grand Cayman in the Cayman Islands, and his wife Wanda are serving as hosts for Gonzalez during his visit to the U.S.

"We now have 260 churches in Cuba," said Gonzalez. "We also have 325 missions, 1,200 house churches, and 20,000 members. We have 140 pastors, one seminary with 17 extensions, one Baptist camp, and one Baptist elderly home. Our headquarters are in Havana."

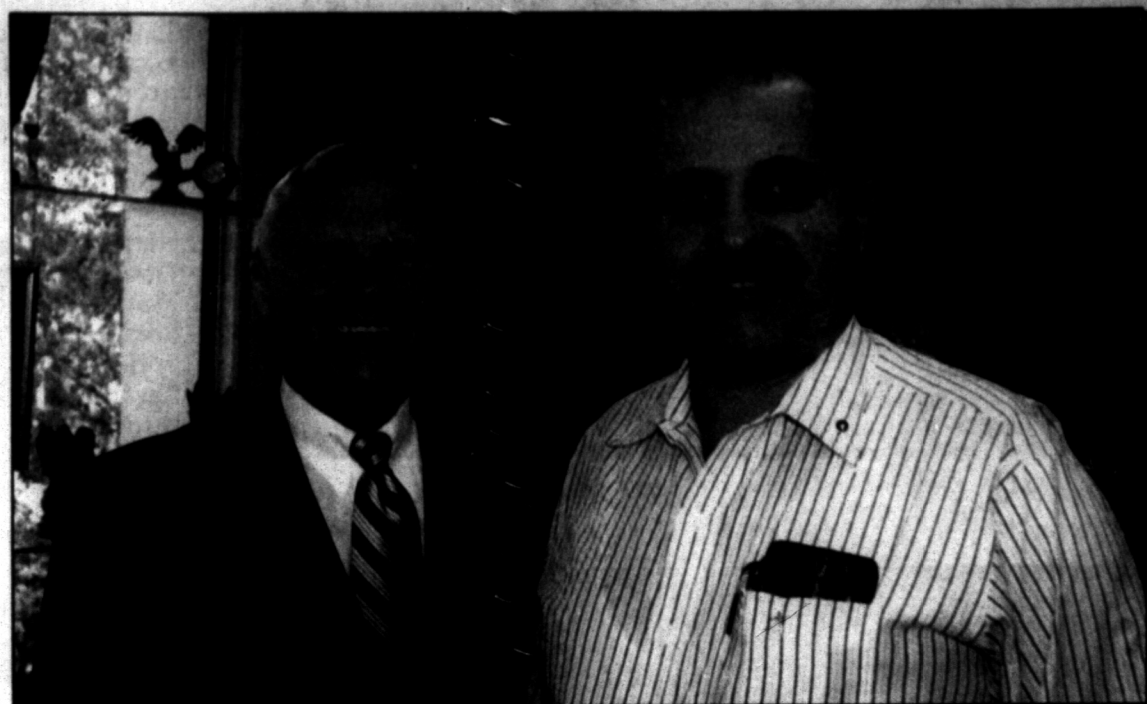
I am the first layman to be elected president of the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba."

There is also a Baptist convention in eastern Cuba, which has worked independently from the western Cuba Baptists. For the first time, all the Baptists have come together for fifty days of concentrated prayer, with the goal of one million new disciples of Jesus and 100,000 new home churches in the next three years.

"We are asking all our brothers and sisters in America to join us in praying for Cuba," Gonzalez said. "We are asking for revival in all of Cuba, and that the Lord might heal the nation."

Gonzalez referenced a website, [www.50dias.org/englishversion](http://www.50dias.org/englishversion).

For more information on Baptist work in Cuba, contact Ken Rhodes, missions mobilization director for the Mississippi Baptist Convention, at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (800) 748-1651 toll-free outside Jackson or (601) 292-3239. E-mail: [krhodes@mbcb.org](mailto:krhodes@mbcb.org).



**TALKING MISSIONS** — Victor Gonzalez (right), president of the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba, visits with Jim Futral, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, during a recent tour of the Baptist Building in Jackson. Gonzalez, a Havana oncologist, sees great potential in the coming months and years for Baptist work in the island nation less than 90 miles off the Florida coast. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



## MS POSITIONS

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**FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC.** Parkview Baptist Church, Greenville, Miss., is seeking a full-time minister of music. Please send resume to personnel committee, 712 McAllister St., Greenville, MS 38701, or email to [parkviewp@bellsouth.net](mailto:parkviewp@bellsouth.net).

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ational funds available. Call or fax resume to 601-264-7699. Or mail to FBC of Bellevue, 7173 US Hwy 98 W, Hattiesburg, MS 39402.

**SEEKING PART-TIME MINISTER OF** music: Gillsburg Baptist Church, Gillsburg, Miss., searching for a minister of music. Mail resumes for this position or the interim position to Chris Teasley at 6126 MS Hwy 568, Osyka, MS, 39657 or call 601 542-1230.

**FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC.** North Winona Baptist Church, Winona, Miss., is seeking a full-time minister of music. Please send resume to North Winona Baptist Church, attn: music search committee, 602 Alberta Drive, Winona, MS 38967. Or email to [nwbc@duckwood.net](mailto:nwbc@duckwood.net).

**MCHENRY FBC, IS CURRENTLY SEEKING** a music minister/worship leader. Interested parties are encouraged to email the church, [mchenryfbc@bellsouth.net](mailto:mchenryfbc@bellsouth.net). For more information, Or you may call the church at 601-928-4644.

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. First Church, Leakesville



2. The Aultmans



3. Union Hall Church, Brookhaven



4. Seminary Church, Perry County

1. The children's choir of First Church, Leakesville, presented the musical Down by the Creek Bank Apr. 20, with about 30 children participating.

2. Victory Church, Jefferson Davis County, held a celebration lunch Apr. 27 in honor of Gerald Aultman and Mrs. Aultman, who has retired after serving a number of churches in Mississippi and Louisiana over the past 65 years.

3. The GAS of Union Hall Church, Brookhaven, received sashes and patches for their achievements Feb. 3. Shown are Mallory Cain, Alexis Montgomery, Kristen Britt, Autumn Beavers, Erin Milholen, Makalah Smith, Lauren Smith, Abbe Richardson, and Anne McGee.

4. Seminary Church, Perry County, had a dedication service for their new playground Apr. 19. Shown are Mary Frances Edwards, honored for her generous contribution, and several children.

5. Holly Spring Church, Brookhaven, broke ground on their Family Life Center Feb. 3. Shown are Elton Smith, Lafayette McDavid, Sunny Sandifer, Glen McInnis, Tommy Franklin, and John Curtis Smith.

6. Tangipahoa Church, Summit, recognizes its RAs with the cars made for the associational race-off.

7. The W.O.M. of First Church, New Albany, made 103 dresses for the Hemmed in Prayer ministry. Shown are some of the members of the day group.

8. Ridglea Heights Church, Moss Point, held a baby dedication for triplets Maryanna Elizabeth, Clifton Donald, and Macey Georgia Jay May 4. Shown are the triplets with parents Joey and Sharon Jay.

9. VBS: Liberty Church, Carroll County: Kickoff, June 7, 2 p.m.; June 9 - 12, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

10. VBS: First Church, Fannin; June 1 - 5; dinner, 5:30 - 6:20 p.m.; meetings, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

11. VBS: Highland Church, Natchez: May 24, fun day, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.; regular meetings, May 26 - 30, 8:30 a.m. - noon; Family day, May 24, noon - 1 p.m.



5. Holly Springs Church, Brookhaven



6. Tangipahoa Church RAs



7. First Church, New Albany



8. Ridglea Heights Church, Moss Point



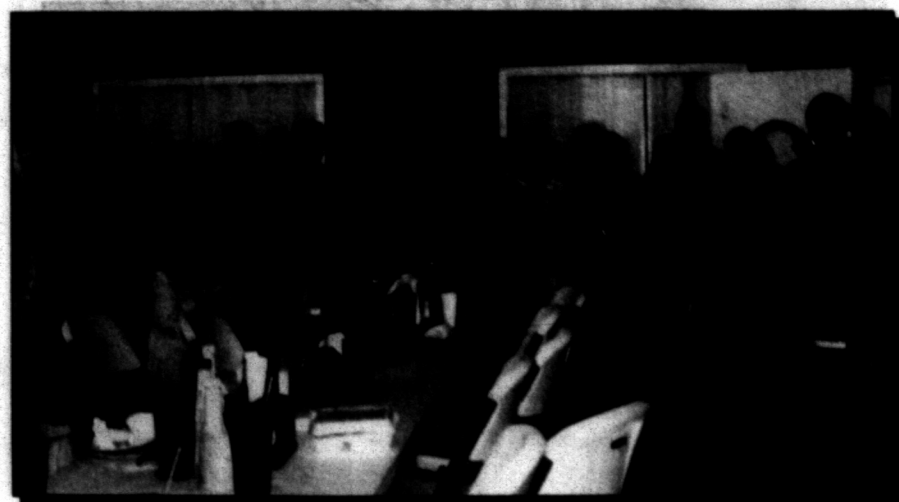
## JUST FOR THE RECORD



13. Ladner, Layton, and Bosworth



14. Calvary Church, Petal



15. Rocky Point Church, Carthage



16. Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale

12. Bethel Church, Yalobusha Association, will present the VBS musical Outrigger Island June 2-6 p.m. VBS will be June 2-6, 1-4 p.m.

13. First Church, Runnelstown, recently licensed Rhett Ladner and Trey Bosworth to the gospel ministry. Shown are Ladner, pastor Chris Layton, and Bosworth.

14. Calvary Church, Petal, broke ground for a new sanctuary Mar. 30, which is part of the last phase of the church's recovery efforts from Hurricane Katrina. Shown are participants in the ground breaking.

15. Rocky Point Church, Carthage, celebrated senior citizens day in April. Shown are the participants.

16. Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, held a parent dedication/baby recognition May 11. Shown are the five families that participated.

17. Poplar Springs Church, Mendenhall, honored pastor Ted Bowlin and family with a reception May 4 in recognition of their one year anniversary. Shown, front, are Bowlin, Catherine Hopkins, and Tanya Baeuerle; back, Nolan Parker, Alfred Ponder, Jason Brewer, Buster Shows, and Russell Bowman.

18. Edwards Church, Edwards, held a baby dedication for John Mason Greene, son of Marty and Amy Green. Shown are the Greene family and pastor John McCall.

19. Thirty-two boys and girls of the Mississippi Association participate in a RA race-off May 3. Shown are the participants.

20. Parkway Church, Morton, recognizes its Mission Friends on Mission Friends Day recently. Shown are Vaden Latham, Avery Gordon, Brady Paul Phillipson, Taylor Coward, and Tyler Coward.



17. Poplar Springs Church, Mendenhall



18. Edwards Church, Edwards



19. RA Race-off, Mississippi Association



20. Parkway Church Mission Friends





# Prayer is powerful connection for separated family

BRANDON, Fla. (BP) — While Army chaplain Mike Fox ministers to the men of the First Cavalry in Camp Taji, Iraq, his father and stepmother are praying for his wisdom in accomplishing what God has called him to do. Dave and Liz Fox of Brandon, FL, also pray for the family their son had to leave behind.

Mike left his home in Killeen, Texas, on Oct. 30, 2006, with his military unit. His family, including his wife Jennifer and children, Reagan, 10; Eli, 5; and Kendra, one; await his return.

Mike and Jennifer met in the youth group at Bell Shoals Church in Brandon during high school. The pair are in contact by webcam almost daily, but the children miss their father deeply, his stepmother said.

Mike was home on leave for a few days in June of last year, and the family gathered at Disney World. According to Liz, the Army recommends that soldiers with small children not go to the family home in order to avoid confusing the children.

Dave and Liz visited in Orlando for one day and then let their son concentrate on his wife and children. "I think that he now understands the guys [in his unit] better," Liz said. "It was the hardest thing for him to leave this time."

When still a teenager, Mike told the Bell Shoals Church congregation that God had called him to Christian service. He joined the Air Force and served as a chaplain's assistant for 12 years, through deployments to Cuba, Korea, and Saudi Arabia.

He left the military briefly, worked in the financial planning business, and attended New Orleans Seminary. As soon as he was eligible, he applied to become an Army chaplain.

"When he called me to tell me that he wanted to be a chaplain, I said, 'Well you know there is a war on,'" Dave said. "He knew he would have to go to Iraq, and he went in with his eyes open."

Dave served in the Army during Vietnam and retired 24 years ago as a lieutenant colonel. With a veteran's perspective, he told the Florida Baptist Witness he advised his son "not to do anything stupid."

"I told him to do his job no matter what the circumstances and do only what the mission calls for," Dave said. "I know he is a soldier first, and sometimes he is in harm's way."

Although Dave and Liz know that Mike lives and works in a dangerous place, they pray "not out of fear, but out of thanksgiving," Liz said. "I know that he is in God's hands, and I pray that he will be comforted in knowing that God is with him whatever he does," she said.

Since Mike's tenure in Iraq began, he has spent much of his time counseling young men and women dealing with marital and financial issues from a war zone. "Mike has even asked us to pray that nobody would get 'Dear John' letters," Dave said, referring to notices that a loved one has given up on the relationship.

Dave and Liz pray for their son to have the right words in counseling situations, and they pray for Mike's family to be able to see the work he is doing as worthwhile. They also pray that "he's not so busy for God that he forgets to be with God," Liz said.

Linda Townsend heads up a ministry to the military and their families at Bell Shoals Church. She and the congregation are partners with Mike in a ministry to his unit called Bunker 182. The name comes from Psalm 18:2, which praises God as "my rock, and my fortress."

In a sort of Christian USO, soldiers gather in camp for entertainment and food. Bell Shoals Church provides coffee, popcorn, and other snacks for the ministry. The chaplain sends out a monthly list of needs, and the church provides whatever he requests. His request for coffee, howev-



**PINNED WITH PRIDE** — Eli Fox is lifted up so he can pin chaplain bars on his dad Mike Fox, a Southern Baptist Army chaplain serving in Iraq. Fox's parents are members of Bell Shoals Church in Brandon, FL, and his family lives at Fort Hood, Texas. He attended New Orleans Seminary. (BP photo)

er, was followed with a "please, no more," when storage space ran out because of church members' generosity.

The chaplain's dedication to his ministry makes Dave and Liz extremely proud, Dave said. "It just makes my heart feel so good," Liz said.

Until Mike Fox returns home, Dave and Liz will continue to stay in contact with him through e-mail and instant messages, but "most of our contact is through prayer," Liz said.

## REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

**Calvary Church, Louisville:** Memorial Sunday, June 8; Services, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Burnette Fielder, speaker.

**Shiloh Church, Foxworth:** Revival, June 8 - 11; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Mike Grenn, speaker; Drew LeBlanc, music; Roy Tidwell, pastor.

**Calvary Church, Waynesboro:** 60th anniversary, Sept. 21, 10:30 a.m.; revival, Sept. 22 - 24; call church office at (601) 735-2333 for more information.

**D'Lo Church, D'Lo:** Revival, June 1 - 4; Sun., 11 a.m., then 7 p.m. nightly; Johnny Sykes, speaker; Robert Sones, pastor.

**Pine Grove Church, Magee:** Revival, June 8 - 11; Sun., 11 a.m., then 7 p.m. nightly; Johnny Sykes, speaker; Van Carter, pastor.

**East Union Church, Magnolia:** Revival, June 15 - 18; Sun., 11 a.m., then 7 p.m. nightly; Johnny Sykes, speaker; Emon White, pastor.

**Pleasant Hill Church, New Hebron:** Revival, Aug. 3 - 6; Sun., 11 a.m., then 7 p.m. nightly; Johnny Sykes, speaker; Phillip Douglas, pastor.

**Shiloh Church, Big Creek:** Homecoming, June 1, 10:30 a.m.; Johnny Hearn, pastor and speaker.

**Antioch Church, Florence:** Homecoming, June 1; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11

a.m., followed by potluck lunch; George Lewis, speaker.

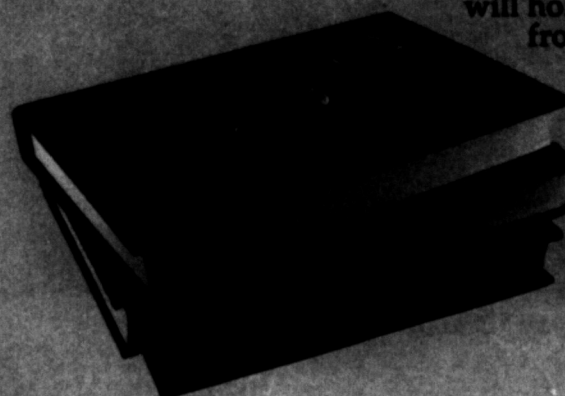
**Liberty Church, Carroll County:** Homecoming, June 1; services, 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch and music by the Kilgore sisters, 1:30 p.m.; Doc Paul Miller, speaker.

**Shiloh Church, Carroll County:** Homecoming, May 25; services, 11 a.m. followed by lunch; Doug Warren, pastor; revival, June 6 - 8; Fri. - Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.; Dale Holloway, speaker; Doug Warren, music.

**Bethel Church, Yalobusha Association:** Homecoming, June 1; Sunday School, 10 a.m., followed by worship and potluck dinner; James Edwards, speaker; Laramie Minga, music.

## Church librarian mini-workshop, June 7 in Columbus

The Golden Triangle Associational Church Library Ministry will hold a mini-workshop for church librarians on June 7, from 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at the Golden Triangle Association office in Columbus. Instructor for the workshop will be Margaret Perkins, library ministry team leader at First Church, Columbus. Perkins will be teaching Cataloging and Classification. The workshop is free; no lunch will be provided. For more information or to register, contact Golden Triangle Association at (662) 328-6802, or Margaret Perkins at (662) 327-1630. E-mail: mperkins@columbusfbc.org.



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## BIBLE DRILL

1. **Rocky Point Church, Carthage**, recognizes its state youth Bible drillers with Cody Jenkins, Hunter Grundy, Kaylin Hester, and Jessie Constable going to the tournament at First Church, Clinton. Jenkins and Grundy went to the semi round. Shown are the youth drillers and the children's drillers.
2. **First Church, Lucedale**, recognizes its youth Bible drillers who participated in the state drills in Hattiesburg.
3. **New Zion Church, Crystal Springs**, recognizes its youth and children's Bible drillers and Bible Buddies.
4. **Ackerman Church, Ackerman**, recognizes its youth Bible drillers: Abby Wood, Ellen Graves, Dayna Presley, and leaders Alison Burney and Megan Sanders.
5. **First Church, Union**, recognizes its state Bible drill winners. Front, Muriel Collins, Caroline Cliburn, Brittany Graham, and Katie Anne Collins; back, Kelley Pedersen, Ryan Ezell, and Amanda Barnett.
6. **Broadmoor Church, Madison**, recognizes its youth and children's Bible drillers.



1a. Rocky Point Church, Carthage



4. Ackerman Church, Ackerman



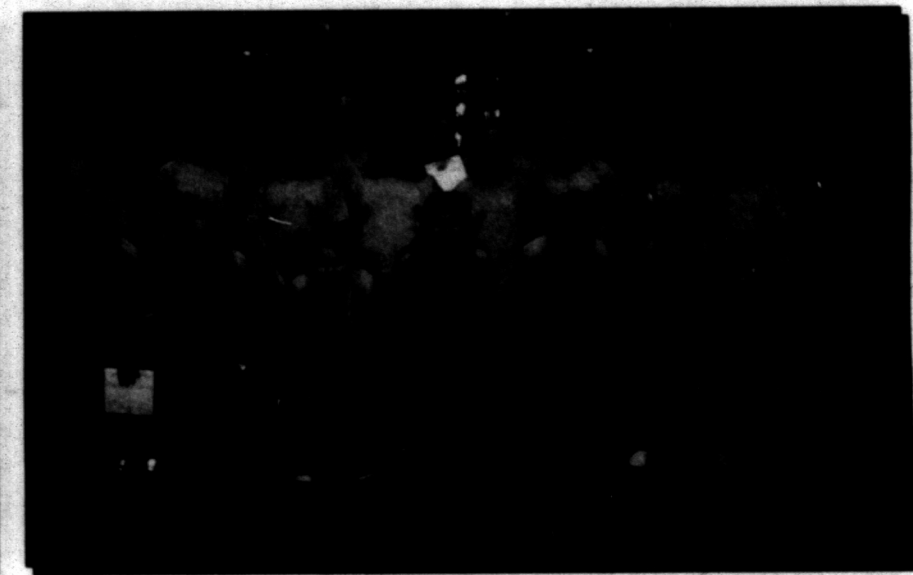
1b. Rocky Point Church, Carthage



5. First Church, Union



2. First Church, Lucedale



6a. Broadmoor Church, Madison



3. New Zion Church, Crystal Springs



6b. Broadmoor Church, Madison

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## HOUSEPARENTS NEEDED

The Baptist Children's Village has an opening for a Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife team without dependent children to serve in the position of relief houseparents on the India Nunnery Campus in Clinton.

Houseparents receive an excellent salary with benefits and work a 10 day on 5 day off work schedule. All qualified candidates must be at least 25 years of age, have a high energy level, excellent driving record and no criminal history. They also must have a high school education or GED. A private bedroom and meals are included while on duty.

For more information and to request an application please call 601-664-8085 or go to [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com).





## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

### Unlocking Your Best Relationship: Repairing Broken Relationships

Ephesians 4:22-32

By Rick Henson

The diet ads love the before and after photos. Have you noticed that the person in the before picture never smiles as does the person in the after photo? "I lost 32 pounds and now fit in a size whatever," says the after person with a toothy grin. The before version's lower lip sticks out along with the waistline.

The apostle Paul described the before and after salvation person in Ephesians 4:22-32. The before-salvation person had deceitful desires, lied, was angry, stole things, had a filthy mouth, was bitter, insulted and slandered others, and refused to forgive. The after-salvation person is the antithesis of all these; righteousness, purity, speaking the truth,

does honest work, building up other people, kindness, compassion and forgiving others. All of these before and after descriptions relate to other people.

When Jesus changes one's life, He also changes how he or she gets along with other people. 1 John 4:20 teaches us, "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen." Some people desire the eternal benefit of salvation without the present-day change. This verse teaches that a genuine love for God results in a genuine love for people.

From these verses in Ephesians we can contrast how



Henson

the old man and the new man related to others. The old man lied. The new man speaks the truth. Only relationships founded upon the truth will succeed. How can we enter into a relationship with someone we do not trust?

The before-Christ person lived in anger, but the after-Christ person puts anger away before sundown. Hebrews 12:15 warns, "See to it that ...no root of bitterness springs up, causing trouble and by it, defiling many." The heart of anger is selfishness. The before person is angry because he or she did not get his or her way. We cannot be selfish and serve Christ. Anger chills relationships and ruins marriages. James 1:20 reads, "For man's anger does not accomplish God's righteousness."

The old man insults and slanders others, while the new man is kind and compassionate. The old man is angry and bitter, while the new man forgives as Christ forgave.

The after-Christ person is responsible for self. As the before-Christ person stole from others, the new man works and even shares of the fruits of his labor. Jesus said in John 10:10 that the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. Those who steal serve their father the Devil. Jesus said He came to give life abundantly. Those who give serve their Heavenly Father.

Nothing reveals our hearts as much as our mouths. Jesus said in Matthew 15:18 "But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a man." James 3:10-11 warns, "Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things should not be this way. Does a spring pour out sweet and bitter water from the same opening?" How can a person sing praises on Sunday and tell dirty jokes at work on Monday? A new man in Christ does not behave this way, unless he or she is a carnal Christian as described in 1 Corinthians 13:3. The words of a new man should be for building up, not tearing down.

From this passage we learn that a new person in Christ is truthful, correctly handles anger and frustrations, is responsible and generous, uses words to build up, and forgives others. All of these characteristics are essential to a relationship. The description of the new man is actually a description of Jesus. He was all of this and more. As John the Baptist replied when asked about Jesus' rising fame and his declining notoriety in John 3:30 "He must increase, but I must decrease." When Jesus' lordship increases in us and our selfish desires decrease, we become more like Him.

The above passage contrasts an old man and a new man. Which of the two best describes you? If it is the old man, then maybe you need a new birth. Jesus offers to change your life and your relationships. The more you walk with Jesus, the greater the contrast between the before and after. The more you are renewed in Christ, the more you will also smile.

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Remain Faithful

Genesis 48:3-6; 49:8-10; 50:15-21

By Marion Duncan

On his deathbed, Jacob rallied his strength and sat up when he heard that Joseph had come to him. Jacob reviewed for Joseph how God had appeared to him at Luz and blessed him and gave him the promise of many descendants and the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession for them. (Genesis 48:1-4)

Having a definite understanding of God's purpose for His chosen people, Jacob explained to Joseph how Ephraim and Manasseh, his grandsons by Rachel born to Joseph in Egypt, would be considered sons of Jacob for inheritance just like his own Reuben and Simeon. (48:5)

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons. (Hebrews 11:21) Jacob kissed them and embraced

them and said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too." (48:11) Joseph put Ephraim, the younger, at Jacob's left hand and Manasseh, the older, at his right hand, but Israel crossed his hands and put his right hand on Ephraim's head. (48:13-14) When Joseph saw this, he said, "No, my father, this one is the first born... But his father said, 'I know, my son, I know...Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations.'" (48:18-19) Note: Hebrews 10:9. Jacob's crossing his arms is a picture of the cross where God put aside the natural and established the spiritual. When we were born again, God rearranged our spiritual "birth



Duncan

order." (Wiersby) Jacob blessed Joseph and gave him the ridge of the land taken with his sword and bow. (48:22 and see John 4:5)

Jacob called for his sons and said: "Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you ...," (Genesis 49:1) and he

delivered his prophetic benediction on them. The tribe of Reuben would lose its identity altogether. (49:3-4) Simeon's tribe would be divided among the others. The tribe of Levi would become the priestly tribe (amazing grace!). (49:5-7) Judah would be chief among the tribes; Jesus would be the "Lion of the tribe of Judah." (49:8-12 and see Revelation 5:5) Zebulun and Issachar would remain close to each other—Zebulun on the seacoast engaged in maritime pursuits and Issachar an agricultural tribe in lower Galilee. (49:13-15) The tribe of Dan would produce the judges, one of which was the illustrious Samson. (49:16-18) Gad would become

the unconquered tribe. (49:19) Asher would occupy the seacoast between Tyre and Carmel, fertile and rich in corn and oil. (49:20) Naphtali, the uninhibited tribe, would contribute "free spirits" to the world of that day. Joseph, the sustainer of Israel, received generous blessings from Jacob realized in the history of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. From the tribe of Benjamin would come King Saul and Saul of Tarsus who became Paul the Apostle.

When Jacob had finished blessing the twelve tribes of Israel, he gave these instructions: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in ...Canaan ..." (49:28-32) After he gave them instructions, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last breath and was gathered to his people. (49:33)

Joseph wept over his father and kissed him. He directed the physicians of Egypt to embalm his father, a process which took forty of the seventy days the Egyptians mourned Jacob. (Genesis 50:1-3) Joseph told Pharaoh about his oath to take his father's bones back to

Canaan. With Pharaoh's blessings, Joseph and all his kin people, accompanied by all the dignitaries of Egypt, went to bury Jacob. (50:1-9) Through this, God first gained the attention of the Canaanites. (50:11)

After burying his father, Joseph and those with him returned to Egypt. His brothers feared Joseph would seek revenge against them, but he said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish ...the saving of many lives...I will provide for you and your children." (50:19-21)

At 110 years old, Joseph told his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up ...to the land he promised ...then you must carry my bones up from this place." (50:24-26)

Genesis ends with bones in a coffin, the result of sin. But, the Bible ends with an invitation to a beautiful city (Revelation 21-22) prepared for all who take the free gift of the water of life.

Duncan is wMu director at First Church, Starkville

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) type-written, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be

clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

# THE BAPTIST Record



# Analysis: He served honorably; did he know the Lord?

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Sometime shortly after 9 a.m. on November 14, 2007, the mortal remains of an old soldier were laid to rest in the hallowed ground of Arlington National Cemetery.

This American son was a patriot of the first order and a good man, once you worked your way past the gruff exterior. He had a penchant for sarcasm, a quick wit and the kind of smile — mostly hidden away behind a bushy mustache — that never leaves your memory.

He did not die in Iraq or in Afghanistan. He died from a long illness, leaving a wife and two daughters. He was a military historian who accompanied the surviving members of the 101st Airborne from D-Day to France for the 50th anniversary of the invasion. He was proud to be a part of their tradition.

He served with L Company, 75th Rangers, Echo Recon, 2nd of the 501st, 101st Airborne in Vietnam. He received the Combat Infantry Badge, three Purple Hearts, two Bronze Stars for Valor, one Silver Star for Valor, and a Presidential Citation. He bore the scars of battle on his face.

I was proud to call him my friend. Two weeks ago, I thought about him as I was



Tomlin

driving home from work. "I wonder how he's doing," I thought to myself. In the hustle of traffic in Dallas-Fort Worth, my attention soon was diverted to the cars darting in front of me like ants scurrying to a picnic.

He crossed my mind the next day, too. "It's almost Thanksgiving, almost Christmas." That's when we usually talked, but we hadn't for almost two years.

Some two weeks after he'd first crossed my mind, I thought about him again and thought the Lord might be trying to tell me something. I tried to find his number but couldn't, so I did what most tech-savvy people do. I went to the Internet. I found his obituary instead.

I first met him in 1990. He was the volunteer Vietnam veteran with many stories to offer about what life was like in combat. He never tired of me asking him questions, or so it seemed to me.

It wasn't long after we'd first met that we had our first conversation about religion. It wasn't the sort of direct, intentional conversation you have with some-

one with whom you want to share the Gospel. It was more about his dislike for religion and specifically people who claimed they had it all figured out, people "who think their way is the only way."

From that day forward I prayed for him, and in every conversation I had with him afterwards, I knew I needed to be bold and say what the Lord had laid on my heart — about how much He loved my friend and his family, how He longed for him to enter into Paradise, how Jesus had been wounded mortally for his sin, but I never did.

Shortly after I took my father back to Vietnam in 2005, I called my friend to tell him the difference the trip had made in my father's life. He thought my father being able to deal with the loss of his friends in Vietnam was a good thing. We said our goodbyes, again without me voicing any presentation of the Gospel.

Then, a few minutes later, I sat down and wrote him a letter. In the letter I explained that I had no excuse for not sharing the message of Christ with him earlier, that I wanted him to know that there was hope beyond this life.

I told him of what Christ had done in the heart of my Green Beret father. If He could change a hardened Special

Forces sergeant, He could change a hardened paratrooper from the legendary Screaming Eagles.

I sent the letter, and never spoke with him again. I thought I had absolved my Christian conscience. I had given him the message in written form, but today I am wondering if he ever received it.

Did he dismiss my rendering of the Gospel? Did it make him think about life outside this mortal coil? I will likely never know, unless somehow, by the grace of God, my friend's own vision for things eternal was awakened and the Spirit of God poured into his heart. Perhaps that is why I have grieved so much.

I had 17 years to convince my friend of the truth of God's Word. I can only hope that, though he has found his earthly resting place among his band of brothers, that he is enjoying the beginnings of a long and happy eternity with Christ.

That may be the only way I sleep for a while.

Greg Tomlin, a former director of communications and public relations for Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, is the director of marketing, news, and information at the University of North Texas-Dallas.

## College News

1. Gary Mayfield, who has been serving as interim dean of the Mississippi College School of Humanities and Social Sciences since summer of 2006, has been promoted to dean of the School.
2. Memorial Hospital Auxiliary awarded a total of \$60,000 for scholarships to the University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast, William Carey University on the Coast, Pearl River Community College, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Jeff Davis, Jackson County and Perkinson campuses, in a ceremony held April 17 at Memorial Hospital.
3. Stacy Reeves, assistant professor of education at William Carey University, is invited to the International Reading Association World Congress in Costa Rica where she will be part of a symposium entitled "Performance Literacy Among Children of Poverty."
4. Susan Gibson, assistant professor of psychology at William Carey University, presented applied research at the 2008 Annual Conference of the California Association for Alcohol and Drug Educators in April. The panel presentation, entitled "Neurotransmission Restoration Therapy," examines a promising treatment for individuals struggling with alcohol and substance addiction.

## State Changes

1. Randy Lewman has been called by the Lincoln Association as Associational Missions Director, effective June 2.
2. First Church, Lumberton, held a reception to welcome their new pastor John R. Sapp and his wife Paula. Sapp was called to the church with a 100% vote. Shown are the Sapps.



2. The Sapps

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## Mississippi Baptists

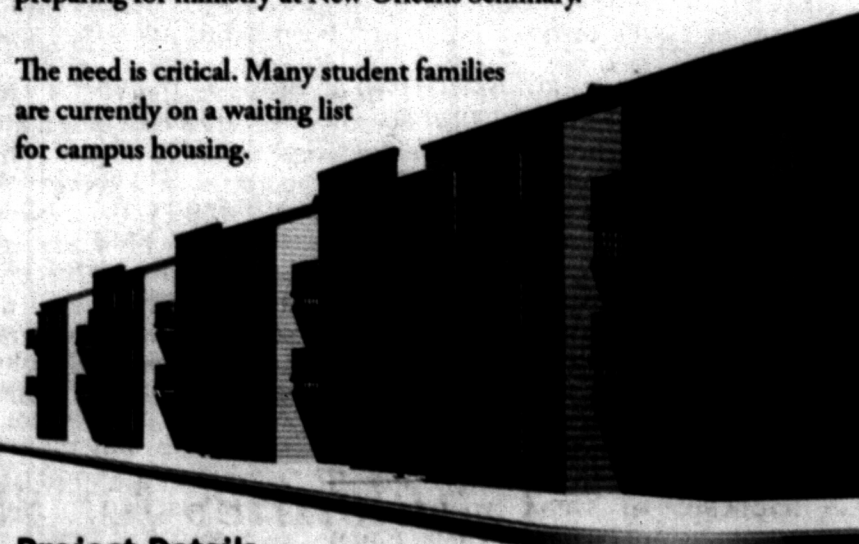
Giving Back to New Orleans Seminary

### The Mississippi Manor Project at NOBTS

The Mississippi Manor Project was launched by a group of Baptists in Picayune and is designed to provide funding for a new apartment complex at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Since Hurricane Katrina, when 92 campus apartments were damaged beyond repair, the seminary has faced a housing shortage. Mississippi Manor will provide 36 two-bedroom apartments for student families preparing for ministry at New Orleans Seminary.

The need is critical. Many student families are currently on a waiting list for campus housing.



### Project Details

- Cost of Construction: \$5 million
- Construction time: 9 months
- Sponsor an apartment: \$139,000
- Building Area: 34,050 SF
- Apartment Size: 830 SF

Can you help meet this critical need?

For more information about Mississippi Manor or to give to the project, contact Tom Boone in Picayune 1-800-426-1886 or [msnobts.bellsouth.net](mailto:msnobts.bellsouth.net)